Claims

1.   A method of planning demand for a configurable product having at least one product dependent characteristic and one product independent

5   characteristic in a managed supply chain, comprising the steps of:

providing a data storage system to store data with respect to a plurality of product independent characteristics and product dependent characteristics,

inputting the selection of at least one product to be represented,

inputting the selection of a particular characteristic to be represented,

10   inputting a planning parameter with respect to the selection of a particular characteristic or product,

loading data to be represented from the data storage system into a buffer,

performing a calculation on the represented data with respect to the product dependent characteristics and the product independent characteristics,

15   modelling a hierarchy of the represented data, wherein the hierarchy is defined in accordance with the planning parameter,

using the hierarchy for the administration of the buffered data.

2.   A method according to claim 1, the administration of the buffered

20   data includes the step of:

performing a propagating recalculation of a change in the represented data through the data storage system, where the calculation differs from that defined by the planning parameter,

25   3.   A method according to any preceding claim, including the step of preparing the recalculated represented data for saving in the data storage system.

4.   A method according to claim 3, including the step of loading the recalculated represented data into the data storage system.

5.   A method according to any preceding claim, wherein the calculation is a disaggregation calculation.

6.   A method according to any preceding claim, wherein the recalculation is a disaggregation or an aggregation calculation.

7.   A method according to any preceding claim, wherein the data storage system is an object oriented data base.

8.   A method according to any preceding claim, wherein the modelling step includes modelling the hierarchy with respect to the product dependent characteristics and the product independent characteristics.

9.   A method according to any preceding claim, wherein the calculating step is carried out by the data storage system.

10.   A method according to any preceding claim, wherein the calculating and recalculating steps calculate the incidence of each product dependent characteristic and each product independent characteristic in accordance with the selected product .

11.   A demand planner apparatus for planning demand for a configurable product in a managed supply chain, wherein said demand planner is operatively associated with a data storage system to store data with respect to a plurality of product independent characteristics and product dependent characteristics, and wherein said demand planner is operatively associated with a user interface for receiving input of the selection of at least one product

to be represented, input of the selection of a particular characteristic to be represented, and input of a planning parameter with respect to the selection of a particular characteristic or product, said demand planner apparatus comprising:

5   a storage medium having recorded therein processor readable code processable to plan demand for a configurable product in a managed supply chain, said code

comprising data loading code processable load data to be represented from the data storage system into a buffer, calculation performing code processable

10   to perform a calculation on the represented data with respect to the product dependent characteristics and the product independent characteristics, hierarchy modelling code processable to model a hierarchy of the represented data, wherein the hierarchy is defined in accordance with the planning parameter,

15   using code processable to use the hierarchy for the administration of the buffered data.

12.   A demand planner apparatus according to claim 9, wherein said using code includes propagating recalculation performing code processable to

20   perform a propagating recalculation of a change in the represented data through the data storage system, where the calculation differs from that defined by the planning parameter,

13.   A user terminal comprising means operable to perform the method

25   of any of claims 1-10.

14.   A program storage device readable by a processing apparatus, said device embodying a program of instructions executable by the processor to perform the steps of any one of claims 1-10.

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